

# Elkhart Aeroplex Business Park

---

## Economic Development Plan

---

Elkhart Redevelopment Commission

August 2002

# Acknowledgments

## City of Elkhart

The Honorable David L. Miller, Mayor

## Elkhart City Redevelopment Commission

William Lavery (Pres.)

Ann Kalman (V.P.)

Steve Eldridge (Sec.)

Brent Curry

Prudy Holzhausen

## Staff Support from the Department of Planning and Development

# Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
History .....	1
Purpose .....	1
Goals and Objectives .....	1
Property Owners.....	2
Legal Description.....	2
Zoning .....	2
Present Land Use.....	2
Proposed Economic Development Activities and Projects .....	3
TIF Designation and Statutory Authority .....	3

## Attachments

Site Plan

Legal Discription

## **Introduction**

The establishment of a tax increment financing (TIF) area will provide for the temporary allocation of increased property tax proceeds to the Economic Development Area. The selected area to be allocated is a partially wooded tract that is located within the City of Elkhart and includes the municipal airport to the north and an abandoned landfill (Superfund site) to the south. Not including the airport the size of the developable land is over 400 acres. See attached site plan.

## **History**

The history of the site reflects the settlement of the Midwestern United States. The Potawatomi Indians were the dominant Indiana tribe when the Europeans first began exploring and settling this area. The population of Elkhart County was approximately 950 people when it was established on June 29, 1830. Chief Pierre Moran sold the land to Dr. Havilah Beardsley, whose family became related to the Miles family. The Miles family was a significant influence in the history of Elkhart.

## **Purpose**

As Elkhart's outward expansion put pressure on open space and traditional farm activities, several farsighted local leaders began to set aside land for future needs. A local visionary named John W. Weaver was not only the Mayor of Elkhart but also the City Engineer. With the booming 1970's economy and the expansion of the Elkhart Municipal Airport, John Weaver saw the need for a major traffic route to connect the growing industry in the airport area with the Indiana Toll Road and the City. The four lane divided highway was considered to be a bit ahead of its time. The time has now come for new development to occur along the John Weaver Parkway. This plan will promote this development.

## **Goals and Objectives**

1. Create a fund through tax incentives
2. Encourage economic development of the area
3. Utilize an airport with high potential as a catalyst

Today, the site for the Elkhart Aeroplex Business Park has a number of attributes that make it attractive for mixed use or integrated development. Its natural wooded beauty and proximity to a corporate flight center affords it a distinctive corporate environment with great potential. Unique in location, size and configuration the site poses several challenges while offering definite opportunities for growth and substantial community improvement. While located within the City limits, the tract is remote from the City of Elkhart's municipal sanitary wastewater collection system, but has along its eastern boundary a major municipal water transmission main. Served by an arterial street,

which is part of Elkhart's peripheral roadway system, the logical development as a business park is inevitable and further recommended by Elkhart's comprehensive land use plan.

**Property Owners**

City of Elkhart

HIMCO (Superfund Site)

D & J Realty

**Legal Description**

See Attached

**Zoning**

The redevelopment zoning ordinance provides quality control for planned growth within and around the City. Several sections of the ordinance may apply to the project and provide for varying degrees of impact or guidance on project plans. The sections are listed below as in the ordinance.

Section 17 – BP Business Park

Section 18 – M-1 Limited Manufacturing District

Section 22 – Wetlands Conservation Overlay District

Section 25 – Airspace Control Overlay District

Section 26 – Development Standards

**Present Land Use**

The area includes the Elkhart Municipal Airport to the north. The remainder of the site is divided nearly in half by the John Weaver Parkway, a four lane median divided roadway. The generally flat to rolling terrain is partially wooded, with areas of brush and close ground cover, as well as open agricultural land. The wooded areas consist of mostly mature hardwoods of the oak and maple variety. Farming in the area includes corn and soybeans.

A regulated county drain traverses the property from the north to south, and passes through one of the two potential wetland areas partially located on the parcel. This drain is known as the Manning Osborne Ditch. Designated wetland areas are located south of John Weaver Parkway and are of fair to poor quality. The lack of diverse plant life and

consistent soil qualifiers seem to marginally provide for classification as protected wetlands.

The designated area also includes a 50-acre former dumpsite that operated from 1960 through 1976. Currently listed as an U.S. EPA Superfund site, the former dump was placed on the national priorities listing in 1988. U.S. EPA preliminary evaluations indicated no immediate hazards to human health or the environment.

### **Proposed Economic Development Activities and Projects**

Most land use or classifications adjoining the site are recommended to remain unchanged. New activities and projects may include the following:

1. Industrial park – The proximity to the airport will be very attractive to businesses locating in this area.
2. Road improvements – Improving the roadway system throughout the area is a critical component to retaining businesses and attracting new companies.
3. Streetscape and gateway enhancement – This could include improved lighting on the John Weaver Parkway
4. Sewer expansion
5. Storm water retention – A broad view of the area may provide:
  - a) efficient ways of addressing storm water,
  - b) opportunities to utilize the retention areas as a passive recreation space for employees or visitors; and
  - c) ways to minimize the amount of space dedicated to detention on individual properties, allowing the owner to better utilize the land for business purposes.
6. Aesthetic improvements – The image of the Economic Development Area is very important for the attraction of new development and the retention of existing businesses.
7. Superfund Site – A recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant will be utilized to conduct a feasibility study for this site. Possible options for this site include the following:
  - a) Recreation (i.e., Golf Course, trails, etc.),
  - b) Convention Center; and
  - c) Cultural (i.e., amphitheater)

### **TIF Designation and Statutory Authority**

The proposed area will be designated as an Allocation Area for TIF purposes. Indiana Code 36-7-14.5 provides the authority to the Redevelopment Commission to adopt and implement this Economic Development Plan.

# Proposed Aeroplex TIF Area

